5% for NTPC, Neyveli Lignite Corporation and NHPC and 10% for POWERGRID. The surcharge is intended to specifically meet a portion of the capital expenditure for the purpose of capacity addition. The amount collected and invested in the project will not earn any return on equity in the tariff. To allay the apprehensions of States, CERC has in its order indicated the manner of collection, deposit and expenditure from the amount collected by way of such uses.

Hearings before CERC are transparent and in the above cases some of the representatives of state level utilities were present. The order of CERC is yet to be implemented as there is a stay order granted by the Hon'ble Delhi High Court.

Setting up National Power Grid

4350. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been actively considering a proposal to set up a National Grid to solve the problem of power in the entire country;

(b) if so, whether the Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. has since failed to meet the requirement of power in the country;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether ADB and other financial institutions have agreed to provide loans to Government for setting up a National Grid; and

(e) if so, the time by when it is likely to be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (e) Development of transmission system to form National Power Grid is a continuous process. At present, Indian Power system is divided into five Regional grids and within each region strong inter-connection and well developed Regional grids are in position. In order to extend the benefit of generation resources all over the country and to transfer surplus power in one region to a power deficit region, interconnections of regions have been planned.

POWERGRID was established in 1989 with the mission to establish and operate Regional and National Power Grids to facilitate transfer of power within and across the regions with reliability, security and economy on sound commercial principles. POWERGRID, as Central Transmission Utility is responsible for undertaking transmission of energy through inter-State transmission system and evacuation of power from all Central Power Stations and delivery of allocated power to constituent States. POWERGRID has exhibited excellent performance and have received 'Prime Minister's MOU Award' by ranking amongst top ten PSUs in 1997-98 and 1998-99.

POWERGRID has already chalked out its plan to integrate all the regions through HVDC stations/bi-pole and 765 KV AC rings to facilitate the transfer of power between the regions without any constraint. The HVDC inter-regional links between western and northern, western and southern and eastern and southern regions are already existing and HVDC link between eastern and northern region is under construction.

Presently, the inter-regional power transfer capacity has been raised to 4350 MW from a mere 500 MW in 1992-93. For further strengthening of the National Grid, high capacity long HVDC links as well as AC links have been planned to be commissioned along with Mega Projects. With these interconnections, the total inter-regional power exchange capability would be increased to about 14,000 MW by 2004-05. In the ultimate phase, a strong synchronous National Grid has been envisaged to evacuate the power from major generating resources. This would involve development of high capacity transmission corridor in chicken-neck area and establishment of a ring of 765 KV lines interconnecting Eastern, Western and Northern regions. Inter-regional transmission capacity of the proposed ultimate National Grid would increase to about 30,000 MW.

POWERGRID has planned to invest about Rs. 80,000 crores for implementation of projects including those required for development of strong and vibrant National Grid capable of transferring 30,000

MW power by the year 2012. In order to meet the massive investment plan, POWERGRID has been raising loans from the market and international financial institutions like Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank from time to time. ADB has recently approved a direct loan of US $ 250 million to POWERGRID for its grid strengthening, inter-regional and generation linked transmission projects. The loan has become effective from 10th January, 2001. POWERGRID is also negotiating a loan of US $ 450 million from World Bank for implementation of its various transmission schemes.

Plan to revise the Pension Scheme

4351. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons who received/proposed to receive old age pension released by the Central Government to the States of North-Eastern Region for the years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002; and

(b) whether there is any plan to revise the pension scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) The number of persons of the North-Eastern States who received old age pensions under National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) during 2000-01 is 361682 as per reports received so far. The number of persons proposed to be covered during 2001-02 is under finalisation.

(b) No, Sir. At present, there is no plan to revise the NOAPS.

Old Age Pension Scheme in Assam

4352. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of beneficiaries under the Old Age Pension Scheme in Assam; and

(b) The amount allotted under the scheme to the State for the current year as well as for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) The